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FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS, THE LESBIAN AND GAY WEEKLY

ACT UP blasts insurance bias

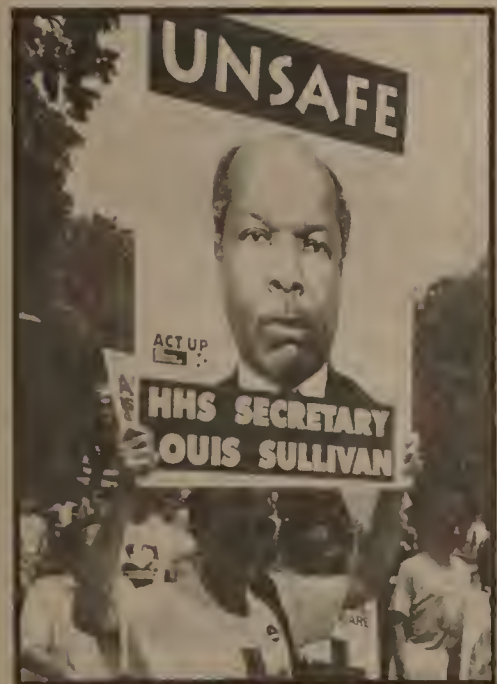
AIDS activists from across the country take to the streets of D.C. to demand fair policies for PWAs and sound the call for a national health care system

By John Zeh

WASHINGTON—Carrying black coffins emblazoned with trademarks of insurance companies, nearly 220 members of 10 ACT UP chapters blocked traffic and picketed the White House May 13.

Activists from San Francisco, Dallas, Philadelphia, Boston, New York State and other areas rallied outside the headquarters of the industry's major trade organization, and held a symbolic "burial" of businesses that they say have lied and failed to adequately address the AIDS epidemic.

"We're here to declare war on the insurance industry," said event organizer Brian Zabcik of ACT UP/New York. "Since the insurance industry has written off people with AIDS," he said, "we're going to return the favor and see that they're legislated out of business."



ACT UP targets federal inaction, May 13

Demonstrators also targeted President George Bush and the Health Insurance Association of America (HIAA). After gathering at Dupont Circle, protesters took over southbound lanes of busy Connecticut Avenue during their march to HIAA headquarters and the White House.

Activists hoisted wooden coffins bearing the stenciled names of insurance giants Aetna, MetLife, Travelers and Chubb during the procession. Other protesters carried signs or wore T-shirts with red crosses, the universal sign of relief, that read "AIDS is a Political Crisis," and "Ten Years of Neglect of the AIDS Crisis. White House=Death House."

The demonstrators, who did not have a police permit, distributed fact sheets to passers-by on lunch breaks and motorists caught in the traffic jam along the march route. Two D.C. police on motorcycles who tried to shepherd the marchers onto sidewalks eventually gave up, opening a traffic lane for the boisterous, but polite, entourage.

Unlike the rioters and innocent citizens caught under curfews in nearby Adams-Morgan and Mount Pleasant a week earlier, these demonstrators—mostly white—were allowed to proceed, despite delays for motorists and pedestrians. There were no arrests, but one close call was finessed by ACT UP legal observers and video crews.

"We're here to demand health care for people who may not have the insurance that the privileged people in this society can afford," said Kiyoshi Kuromiya of Philadelphia's Critical Path AIDS Project.

"We're going to shout at George Bush to tell him there are people out here who are quite angry," said Kuromiya, who assisted a person with AIDS in a wheelchair. "Many of us have given up good paying jobs to spend-down to get the health benefits a person needs."

Kuromiya's comments were underscored by ACT UP literature, which noted that obtaining public insurance such as Medicaid is not easy. "You have to go broke to get it," read one leaflet. "Even then, government-backed programs are inadequate because many doctors do not accept Medicaid, and many treatments we need are unavailable under it."

Insurers and HIAA justify their actions with lies, ACT UP's Insurance and Health Care Access Committee charged in a hand-out. "AIDS costs no more, and often less, than other serious illnesses," according to the literature. "No insurer has gone bankrupt from paying AIDS claims and no insurer is in danger of doing so. AIDS claims are only one to two percent of claims-expenses for insurers."

During a die-in outside the White House, tourists and groups of school-kids were asked to "demand a cure for the AIDS crisis" because one out of five Americans has inadequate health insurance or none at all.

"Two presidents in a row have failed to make AIDS a national priority," said one ACT UP member. "More than a hundred thousand Americans are dead as a result. Demand a national health care program and massive medical research funding."

"The insurance industry has basically failed in its obligation to provide access to health care for all Americans, but especially to PWAs," charged ACT UP/New York's Zabcik. "It has placed restrictions to coverage for people with HIV infection, denied coverage altogether and charged more for coverage. That's why we're starting off at the HIAA." Last year, for instance, the lobby filed—and won—a lawsuit on behalf of member companies to test insurance applicants in New York State for infection with HIV.

The dramatic action was tied to the release of calls by Physicians for National Health Care and the Journal of the American Medical Association for reforms of U.S. health-care strategies. It also kicked off a series of protests planned over the next year

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A TALE OF TWO CONFERENCES

Reports from:
the Women and
AIDS Conference

and the National
Lesbian Conference

Postal officials charged with entrapment

A bisexual farmer in Lincoln, Nebraska is the target of an undercover child pornography investigation. The U.S. Supreme Court is slated to hear the case next fall.

By Jacob Smith Yang

LINCOLN, Neb.—The U.S. Supreme Court announced April 23 that it will hear the case of a bisexual Nebraska farmer who was the target of an aggressive 29-month campaign aimed at inducing him to order child pornography through the mail. The U.S. government maintains that the investigation, which led to Keith Jacobsen's arrest and conviction, was legitimate. Jacobsen's attorney argues that the government's undercover operation was entrapment.

George Moyer, Jr., Jacobsen's attorney, told *GCN*, "They were relentless. They tried five different ways to get my client to break the law."

'Common procedure'

Jacobsen's name appeared on a mailing list that was seized during a May 1984 government search of Electric Moon, a magazine company in California. The search also turned up a receipt for "nudist magazines" bearing Jacobsen's name. Postal officials did not consider these magazines pornographic.

A year later, however, the U.S. Postal Inspector targeted Jacobsen in an undercover operation to identify and prosecute those receiving child pornography through the mail. Under Title 18 of the United States Code, receiving pornography through the mail is a federal offense.

Initially, postal officials representing themselves as the "American Hedonist Society" sent Jacobsen a survey about sexual attitudes. They requested that Jacobsen fill out and return the survey, promising to hold his responses in "strict confidence." Jacobsen complied, noting that he was "interested in stories with a gay theme" and "opposed to pedophilia."

A year later, postal officials claimed to be a "lobbying organization seeking liberalization of sexually repressive legislation" and sent Jacobsen two surveys about sexual preferences. Jacobsen did not respond, and,

instead, sent back a note stating that he was "interested in teenage sexuality." This prompted three attempts by postal officials, operating under a false name, to get Jacobsen to send child pornography through the mail. Jacobsen responded by sending an issue of the *New York Native*, a gay newspaper.

In March 1987 postal inspectors stepped up their undercover operation, and sent Jacobsen a catalog of pornographic magazines. Jacobsen ordered a Danish magazine, *Boys Who Love Boys*, described as showing "11-year-old and 14-year-old boys [who] get it on in every way possible."

Postal officials sent Jacobsen the magazine and obtained a search warrant after he had received it. Upon locating the magazine in Jacobsen's house, they arrested him. In April 1988 a jury found Jacobsen guilty of receiving child pornography.

United States Postal Inspector Harold Frost says that it is standard for postal officials to actively investigate and prosecute the receipt of child pornography. "While the details in the Jacobsen case, as in any case, are unique," Frost told *GCN*, "it's common procedure."

Entrapment

Jacobsen and his attorney appealed the jury's decision. A three-judge panel of the Eighth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals agreed that the conviction was invalid because the government had failed to show "reasonable suspicion" in initiating the undercover operation against Jacobsen. The full court, however, reinstated Jacobsen's conviction, saying that "reasonable suspicion" was not needed to justify a government investigation.

Moyer argues that his client was entrapped by the postal officials' undercover operation. An entrapment defense focuses on two issues: the accused's predisposition to commit the crime, which can constitute "reasonable suspicion," and law enforcement officials' inducement to commit the crime. If

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NEWSNOTES

S.F. approves domestic partners' benefits

SAN FRANCISCO—In a landmark decision that may influence other municipal laws around the country, the city's Board of Supervisors approved May 6 an ordinance that will allow city workers to include domestic partners on their health plans. Under the new law, which Mayor Art Agnos has agreed to sign, San Francisco will become the largest municipal system in the United States to offer domestic partnership benefits.

"No city knows better than San Francisco does that lesbian and gay families support each other and care for each other," said Agnos. "We've seen it proven time after time."

According to the *Bay Area Reporter*, a gay newspaper, city employees who include domestic partners on their health plans will pay the same amount as workers who add a spouse. The Mayor's Task Force on Family Policy anticipates that approximately 1,000 gay and lesbian domestic partners will enroll, and that about 800 children of lesbian and gay families will become eligible for benefits.

All health care providers who contract with the city have agreed to provide domestic partnership coverage. In response to concerns that the new law will stretch the city's budget, Supervisor Jim Gonzales said, "City workers will not face higher premiums because of domestic partners, nor will the General Fund bear the costs of the program."

San Francisco's decision may have a positive impact on a similar measure pending in the Boston City Council. The Family Protection Act (FPA), introduced by openly gay councilor David Scondras, would establish city recognition of domestic partnerships and extended families, and would offer them protection from discrimination. The proposed bill would also provide health insurance coverage to domestic partners and some extended family members of city employees.

The FPA has been endorsed by a wide spectrum of civil rights, labor, and religious groups, including local affiliates of the Gray Panthers, the National Organization for Women, the American Jewish Congress, and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. A majority of seven of 13 votes are needed for the bill's passage, and five councilors have voiced their support. A vote is expected on May 22.

—Elizabeth Yukins

From All Walks of Life

BOSTON—Final plans are in the making for New England's largest AIDS fundraising event, From All Walks of Life. The sixth annual 10 kilometer pledge walk will take place on June 2, and organizers expect 25,000 people to participate. The walk's manager, Bradley Seeman, said that this year's event will raise over \$2 million to support the work of the AIDS Action Committee and other AIDS service providers throughout Massachusetts.

"There's a lot of excitement and interest surrounding the walk this year," said Seeman, adding, "We have more volunteers than ever before, and corporate sponsorship has hit record levels." He told *GCN* that more than 1500 volunteers are involved with the event, and that at least 40 companies and foundations have pledged between \$2,500 and \$50,000.

Registration for the walk begins at 8:30 a.m. on the Boston Common. The aerobics warm-up starts at 9:30, and the walk officially commences at 10:00. For more information and pledge sheets, call (617) 266-6906.

—Elizabeth Yukins

Gay Pride in Worcester

WORCESTER, Mass.—For the first time in 15 years, lesbians and gay men in New England's second-largest city celebrated Gay Pride, May 5—May 12. The week's events, which included an evening of Latino performance art and poetry, a video festival, safer sex workshops, a Country/Western dance, and a community picnic, culminated in an indoor Gay Pride rally.

"We're in Worcester, we're an active part of the community, and people should get used to us," Cindy Aiken, co-chair of the Gay Pride Committee, told the approximately 120 people at the rally.

"What I would tell all of you to do is come out," said Chris Brazauskas of Massachusetts' HIV Sexual Minority Task Force. "It takes far more energy to stay in a closet than to come out," she said. "You can change people's attitudes and beliefs by being out."

Worcester's Gay Pride celebration was geared to include people of color within

Worcester's gay community, as well as straight people.

"I wish I saw more Asian and Latin-American lesbians and gays today," said Ray Pifferrer of Worcester's Gay and Lesbian Latino Organization. "White people, however well meaning, are not equipped to speak for us."

Worcester's first Gay Pride celebration, held in June 1975, included an outdoor parade that drew 150 participants. At the time, *GCN* reported that a few hostile spectators yelled insults and threw eggs and stones at participants. While no serious injuries were reported, and police restrained protesters and protected marchers, the 1975 parade is recalled by the Worcester community as an incident of anti-gay violence. Many cited it as the reason that this year's Gay Pride rally was held inside.

"I think we underestimate the power of gays and lesbians in the community," Pifferrer said, "and overestimate the power of homophobes in the city."

"My gut feeling is that we should have had an outdoor march," said Alan Chiras of Leatherforce 2000, an AIDS education program for gay men and lesbians in the leather/SM community. "If we'd marched from the Mailbox [a nearby gay bar] to the church where the rally was held, we would have attracted a lot of attention," Chiras told *GCN*.

"It is our hope that this will be the first of many rallies," said Jerry Cheney, Gay Pride Committee co-chair, adding, "And eventually a parade down Main Street, perhaps in a few months."

—Jacob Smith Yang

Gay man files suit against sheriff's dept.

LOS ANGELES — Charging that he was harassed, prosecuted, and finally fired because of his sexual orientation, a former deputy has filed a \$90 million lawsuit against the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

According to *Update*, a Los Angeles gay newspaper, Bruce C. Boland was fired after the sheriff's department charged him with a felony involving an error in a police report he had filled out. As the arresting officer, Boland had testified at a public hearing of a suspect charged with possession of drug paraphernalia. At that time he pointed out that, while his report stated that he had seen syringes in the front seat of the suspect's car, he had actually seen syringes in the back seat. The district attorney dropped the charges based on the factual discrepancy between Boland's testimony and his report.

Three months later, Boland himself was under investigation. Subsequently the sheriff's department and the district attorney brought felony charges against him for filing a false police report. Boland was reassigned to washing police boats in a marina before the sheriff's department finally fired him.

One of Boland's attorneys, Joel Loquavam, said that this is the first time felony charges have been filed against a deputy over a report's accuracy. A superior court judge had dismissed the case, calling it "inappropriate and an example of gross overfiling."

The sheriff's department and the district attorney, however, have appealed the superior court's decision.

John Duran, Boland's other attorney, said that it was unusual for the sheriff's department to reassign or fire a deputy who had been charged with wrongdoing before a final decision was reached. "There are officers on the beat who have been accused of beating citizens," Duran said.

"It's outrageous," Boland told *GCN*. "The department is trying to ruin my life by pursuing these charges over an error in a report." He added, "I think it's obvious that it's because I'm gay."

Six months before the investigation over Boland's report, a man who was being processed by fellow deputies identified Boland as gay. Soon after, Boland says he was subject to telephone harassment by co-workers, who would call his desk telephone and shout "faggot." He was also questioned by his superiors about his sexual orientation.

"I was ridiculed and subjected to discriminatory treatment because of my sexual orientation," Boland said. "I just wish this nightmare would end so I could return to my patrol car and serve the people of West Hollywood and the county."

Boland has also filed complaints against the sheriff's department with the civil service board and the city of Los Angeles, citing a city ordinance that prevents discrimination based on sexual orientation.

—Jacob Smith Yang

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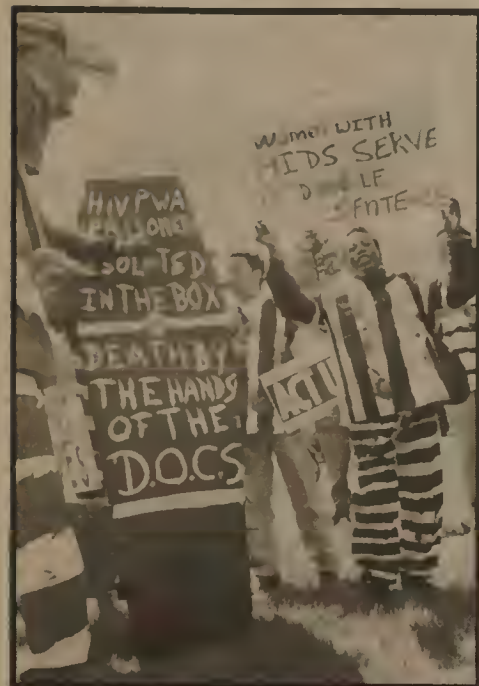
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N.Y. activists decry state of AIDS/HIV in prisons

On the heels of a report by the National Commission on AIDS that drew attention to the lack of adequate education and prevention programs in prisons, ACT UP members target the state with the most number of incarcerated people with HIV or AIDS in prison



A demo with visual appeal

By Sue Rochman

ALBANY, N.Y.—“Even if you're doing time, having AIDS is not a crime” was one of the chants directed at New York State Commissioner of Corrections Thomas Coughlin May 3, when ACT UP members from Ithaca, Syracuse and New York City converged outside his office here. The activists demanded improved care and treatment of HIV-positive prisoners, saying, “Prisoners with HIV and AIDS should not be punished for an offense they did not commit. AIDS is a disease to be treated and prevented, not a crime to be punished.”

About 200 people took part in the demonstration, which included a mock murder trial of Coughlin performed by ACT UP/Ithaca; a rap song, “Shame on America,” performed by Stand Up, the Harlem-based chapter of ACT UP; and a die-in on the steps of the Department of Corrections. Some demonstrators dressed as condoms, dental dams, skeletons or in striped, prison-like attire.

ACT UP/Ithaca member, Karen Snelbecker said that her group began researching AIDS and prison issues last summer. What they found, she said, convinced them of the need to focus a demonstration solely on this issue.

Ioannis Mookas, of ACT UP/New York's prison issues committee, echoed, “Prisoners are the most neglected population in terms of AIDS activism and advocacy. This has been a long time coming.”

AIDS is the leading cause of prison deaths in New York State. “DOCS [Department of Correctional Services] treats more people with AIDS than any other agency in the world,” said Stacey Young of ACT UP/Ithaca. “Yet it has no comprehensive health care, education or prevention program in place for prisoners affected by the AIDS crisis.”

A prison crisis

With the greatest number of infected prisoners in the nation, New York State “has the worst situation,” said Judy Greenspan of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) National Prison Project. Approximately 10,000 of the over 54,000 prisoners housed in New York State's 61 prisons are living with HIV disease; 900 prisoners are symptomatic. Nearly 80 percent of these HIV-positive prisoners are African-American or Latino.

ACT UP members contend that prison officials are ignoring the prison AIDS crisis and have instituted policies that are keeping prisoners from being tested and, in turn, from receiving early treatment. New York State's AIDS policies, they charge, are killing people.

The changes activists are demanding in the DOCS AIDS policies include: improving access to treatment for HIV-positive prisoners; the provision of anonymous testing, pre- and post-test counseling and culturally sensitive HIV/AIDS education; support for peer education programs run by prisoners; the distribution of condoms, dental dams and bleach to all prisoners; and access

to the Family Reunion Program for HIV-positive prisoners.

These demands address many of the recommendations called for by the National Commission on AIDS in its report, “HIV Disease in Correctional Facilities,” released in March of this year. And according to prisoners' rights advocates, ACT UP's protest could not have come at a better time.

“This protest was significant,” said Greenspan, “because the government endorsed and called for these policies that the demonstration is centering around.” The National Commission on AIDS, whose 15 members are appointed by the President and Congress, found the prison situation to be “sobering and troubling.” But Greenspan emphasized that there is no enforceability of the Commission's recommendations. “It is up to the AIDS activist community to bring pressure to bear,” she said.

Coughlin refused to meet with the demonstrators at his office. James Plateau, a spokesperson for the state DOCS, said there was no reason for a meeting to take place. “[ACT UP] shows up at the commissioner's door dressed as condoms and holds a circus and expects him to respond,” said Plateau. “It is far too serious an issue for the commissioner to trivialize.” Furthermore, he said, “New York has implemented, over the years, every recommendation made in that report.”

But prisoners' advocates and people who have been or are currently incarcerated say that these services are not being provided. “New York State has a very poor track record [in dealing with AIDS],” said Greenspan. It is interesting to note, she added, that most of the on-site visits done for the national report were at New York State prisons.

Responded Plateau, “They came here and they did their site visits here, and they saw that everything that they were recommending was being done here.”

Cathy Potler, director of prison projects for the Correctional Association of New York, the only public interest organization in the state with the authority to visit prisons and report its findings and recommendations to the legislature, contended that while it is true that there are some AIDS education, counseling and testing programs in place, there are not nearly enough. And the programs that are in place, she said, “aren't being done the way that they should.”

Access to information

“The Department of Health AIDS Institute is providing anonymous and confidential testing,” Potler said, “but they are doing this on a small scale. What is needed is across-the-board anonymous testing. The programs need to be ongoing and continuous so that people can ask questions and talk with people that they feel understand where they are coming from.”

In some facilities, prisoners have organized and attempted to establish continuous ongoing peer education programs. One woman taking part in the ACT UP demonstration, Katrina Haslip, knows what it is like to try and develop such a program first hand. She was one of the original organizers of the AIDS Counseling and Education (ACE) program, a recognized inmate group since 1988, at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, New York's only maximum security prison for women.

“I was incarcerated for five-and-a-half years,” said Haslip, “and midway through, I learned that I was HIV positive. But it took me 15 months to be open about it. Even with ACE, there are still issues. The health care is minimum. For people with longer sentences, it really is a death sentence.”

Due to ACE, prisoners at Bedford Hills now have access to comprehensive AIDS education programs, peer counseling, buddy support services and legal assistance. While incarcerated, Haslip was allowed out on furloughs to provide AIDS education in the community. Today, she is a health educator for the Upper Manhattan Task Force on AIDS, working primarily with women and children. “There is no question that my work with ACE was important then and for what I am doing now,” she asserts.

But programs like ACE are far from the norm. Whereas ACE now has support from the superintendent at Bedford Hills, educational attempts of prisoners throughout the state “have

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MARILYN HUMPHRIES

Demonstration focuses on women and cancer

BOSTON—More than 100 women gathered May 12, Mother's Day, to demonstrate against the federal government's insufficient response to cancer among women. Organized by the Women's Community Cancer Project, the protest drew attention to the prevalence of women's breast cancer and the desperate need for increased federal funding for cancer research.

“Nothing is going to happen until women get angry and speak out about these issues,” said Donna Gardner of the Women's Cancer Project. “That is exactly what we're trying to do. We will continue to organize, work and rally to call attention to this problem and demand that the federal government do something,” she told GCN.

The Mother's Day event occurred in conjunction with other rallies around the nation, and organizers say that the date was chosen specifically to draw attention to the relationship between breast cancer and mothering.

“The fact is that breast cancer runs in families, and young women with mothers who have breast cancer are worried,” Rita Arditti, another protest organizer, told GCN. “There is also the whole issue of environmental contamination which the government is not dealing with,” she added. “All over the United States women are being advised not to breast feed their babies because of the high level of contaminants in their milk. If it's dangerous for the babies, imagine how bad it is for the mother's breast,” said Arditti.

During the course of the protest, 70 demonstrators signed a petition in support of a bill now pending in Congress that would appropriate \$25 million for research on the causes of breast cancer and ways to prevent it. The Women's Community Cancer Project is also involved with the National Breast Cancer Coalition, a grassroots lobbying group that was launched in Washington on May 16.

“We want new ideas,” said Arditti, in a *Boston Globe* interview. “We're tired of the same old research: radiation, chemotherapy, and mastectomies,” she added. “We're beginning to see this disease as a political issue.”

—Elizabeth Yukins

Date set for another March on Washington

By Elizabeth Yukins

WASHINGTON—After an exhaustive weekend of heated, and, at times, contentious debate, a group of over 100 regional and national delegates has put out a call for a third national lesbian and gay march to take place in Washington, D.C., during the spring of 1993.

“It was a tiring and incredibly intense meeting, but I feel good about the decision we arrived at,” said Drew Siegel, a march organizer from San Francisco. “The meeting was loosely structured, so everyone had the chance to give their views,” he told GCN. “It was unwieldy, but effective. That's the way grassroots organizing is supposed to work.”

Date dilemmas

Delegates from lesbian and gay groups from 22 states were present at the May 11-12 meeting. They were joined by representatives from numerous national organizations, including the Names Project, the National Minority AIDS Project, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, ACT UP, Queer Nation, the Human Rights Campaign Fund and the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force.

Although some activists asserted that it might be more advantageous for lesbians and gay men to advocate for civil rights on the local level, a greater number of participants felt that a large, national march was necessary. March supporters stressed the social and political impact that the 1987 March on Washington had in mobilizing half a million gay and lesbian people. They pointed out that the need for lesbian and gay civil rights remains critical, and said that a national demonstration would emphasize the size and diversity of the gay community. At issue during much of the meeting was when such an action should occur.

“Our main concern was deciding the date for the march, and having it not conflict with other [lesbian and gay] events being planned,” said Leslie Ewing, a San Francisco march organizer. She told GCN, “Things are much more organized now [than in 1987],

and our calendar is full of national actions.”

Other events scheduled over the next four years include a national health care march in the spring of 1992, and an October, 1992 march to demonstrate against the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas. Many participants at the meeting were adamant that a gay and lesbian demonstration not conflict with efforts by Native American people to plan a nationwide commemoration of the Survival of Indigenous Cultures.

Another point of debate was the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the Stonewall riots in New York City. An international array of events is being planned for June, 1994 in New York, and those involved with Stonewall 25 are afraid that a national lesbian and gay march in 1993 will detract from the 1994 celebrations.

“I don't think that our community has sufficient resources to pull off both events two years in a row,” said Steve Ault, an early organizer of Stonewall 25 and a co-chair of the 1987 March on Washington. “Representation and participation will become a problem for both events,” he told GCN, “because people with limited money will have to choose between them. That's doubly unfair.”

Christopher Street West, the Los Angeles gay pride organizing committee, also voiced opposition to a national march for fear it would interfere with Stonewall 25. “With AIDS and everything else demanding attention in the political arena, resources are finite,” Michael Yates, the organization's director, told GCN. “I would hate to see a situation come up where people would have to make an either/or choice between the two events,” he said.

Despite their concerns about the march, however, both Ault and Yates said they will support the 1993 demonstration now that it has been called. “While I have been at the forefront of those opposing the march, I certainly wish them luck,” said Ault. “I hope it will be successful, and I'll do what I can to help.”

Besides arriving at an acceptable date, Continued on page 6

COMMUNITY VOICES

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All letters and "Speaking Out" contributions must be TYPED and DOUBLE-SPACED. Letters can be NO LONGER THAN TWO PAGES. "Speaking Out" contributions can be NO LONGER THAN FOUR PAGES and require a short (one to two sentence) biographical note about the author for inclusion at the end of the article.

Because GCN wishes to encourage dialogue and a diverse representation of perspectives on the letters pages, printing of "Speaking Out" contributions received from authors who have had other "Speaking Outs" appear in GCN recently may be postponed temporarily.

For editing purposes, it is helpful to be able to contact you easily -- please enclose your name, address, and daytime phone number with your letter or article. Thanks.

The opinions expressed in "Speaking Out" contributions are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN staff, Board or membership.

Genetic lesbians

[This is a letter recently sent to organizers of The National Lesbian Conference in Georgia.]

Dear Mel:

To say that I was disappointed by the NLC steering committee's attitude to transsexual women is an understatement. To say that I am furious is closer to the truth.

You say the conference is by, about and for lesbians. Transsexual women can be and are lesbians.

To deny a segment of the community, i.e. transsexual women, is to leave them voiceless, powerless and invisible. We lesbians place ourselves in the disgusting position of perpetrating and perpetuating all of the very societal ills we fight on a constant daily basis by denying any woman access to this conference.

By denying transsexual lesbians you are saying that there are men in this world who would have an invasive surgery, identify as lesbians and therefore women, put themselves into the enviable position of daily physical, emotional, and financial abuse. You are implying that transsexual women are psychologically sick. This is exactly how lesbians and gay men were defined in the '30s, '40s, and '50s. In the course of your decision, you have moved the lesbian movement back to pre-Stonewall attitudes. We are regressing.

When a transsexual woman is abused on the street, it is due to homophobia and

misogyny. I believe that these are topics that will be discussed at the NLC. To remove voices from that discussion hurts all of us, not only the people you remove.

The steering committee has already made their decision about transsexuals. Does the steering committee include any transsexual lesbians? Surely you would not have a discussion about African-American lesbians and not include them. Once again we have an example of a larger group discussing a smaller and less powerful group without the input of that group. Such a discussion can only be based on fear, rumor and hearsay.

The NLC has chosen to define women by our chromosomes. In that context you have chosen to say that we are a pure result of our biologies—that our individual personalities and our psyches are not part of that definition. If so, then why are we not doing our biological duties, and mating with men to perpetuate the human race? Is this not also dictated by our chromosomes? But according to your definition, if we are not following our chromosomal natures, then we are not really women, but something else. This conference then becomes a conference of persons who look a lot like women, but really are not; isn't that the definition you are placing on transsexual women? Does the NLC really understand exactly what it is saying about each and every lesbian when it chooses to define womanhood solely on the basis of genetics? Does the NLC really wish to say this?

For the NLC to victimize a particular group of lesbians is for the NLC to victimize all lesbians.

I have worked in the lesbian/gay community here in New York City for nine years. I am a former Groups Director of Identity House, a lesbian/gay counselling center. I have helped many lesbians come out: come out to our parents, our siblings, workplace and then face society. I have encouraged we women to find our voices, take our power and be visible in the world. I am appalled that the NLC attempts to silence a particular group of lesbians.

My lover, Kathryn Otter, is an accepted member of the New York lesbian community and a feminist. Besides her dedication to the homeless (she has managed and supervised the running of a soup kitchen in the South Bronx), Kathryn has escorted women through abortion clinic picket lines, been arrested twice for participating in the Needle Exchange Program and was recently convicted as one of the "Safe Sex Six" (the result of a protest in 1989 in St. Patrick's Cathedral). All this has been achieved as an OUT transsexual LESBIAN.

That some of us may be uncomfortable with transsexual women should not be the criteria by which we accept or deny access to this conference. This is a conference by, about and for LESBIANS. Surely identification as a lesbian should be enough.

I would have been willing to participate in a discussion and/or facilitate a discussion on "What makes a woman?" But that only "genetic women" can be admitted to a lesbian conference stills many voices and stops much needed communication. I hope you will not continue to perpetuate this discrimination against a much maligned group.

In peace and sisterhood,
Alice M. Tuohey
New York, N.Y.

White women speak out

Dear GCN:

We're members of a group of white women that began meeting recently in the context of a campaign initiated by women of color to fight violence in the Boston area. We're writing in response to your March 25 news story about charges of racism at Indigo, a local male-owned bar catering to the lesbian community, and about the boycott organized by the Alliance of Massachusetts Asian Lesbians and Gay Men (AMALGM) and Association for Right On Sisters (AFROS) after Indigo's management responded inadequately to those charges.

GCN's reporter opened the article by claiming that Boston's lesbian community has been "confused" by this whole nexus of events. We are among the many who feel no confusion about the fact that the management of Indigo is accountable to the community served by the bar and has an obligation to respond in a respectful, swift and open manner to charges that racism or other oppressive behavior occurred on its premises and under its auspices. It was therefore not confusion but distress and anger that we felt as we read in GCN about Indigo's rude and dismissive treatment of two complaints made by women of color. After GCN's story went to press, we learned that under pressure from the AFROS/AMALGM boycott, Indigo's owner

Gay Community News is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of ten, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

Opinions reflected in "editorials" represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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SAFER SEX AND DRUG USE GUIDELINES

GCN offers these guidelines for all of us who are making decisions about sex and drug use in the midst of the AIDS epidemic.

HIV is a virus widely thought to be a cause of AIDS. The highest concentrations of HIV are found in blood and semen. So it's important to avoid any way in which HIV-infected blood or semen can get from one person's body into another person's bloodstream.

- Fucking (anal and vaginal) without a condom and sharing needles account for almost all the documented cases of HIV transmission.
- Oral sex without a condom or dental dam accounts for a very few documented cases of HIV transmission.
- Other ways of transmitting HIV that have not been documented but which could be theoretically risky include: fisting, finger fucking, rimming, deep kissing, sharing uncleaned dildos. The theory here is that any way HIV-infected bodily fluids get from one person into another involves risk. For example, HIV could be transmitted if a person with a cut on their hand fistfucked their partner and caused bleeding in their rectum or vagina.

HOW TO PLAY SAFER

Only you can decide what risks you are willing to take. Some people use safer sex practices with all their partners. Other people make decisions about the risks they are willing to take based on their own and their partners' sexual and drug use history and/or HIV status. People also make decisions based on how comfortable they feel negotiating safer sex in any particular situation. If you and your partner have not talked about past practices and/or HIV status, don't make assumptions. (For example, many lesbians have had unprotected intercourse with a man in the last ten years.)

- Use a condom when fucking. On the condoms, use water-based lubricants like KY. Oil-based lubricants like Crisco, Vaseline, and baby oil may make condoms break.
- Use a condom when sucking dick if your partner is going to come in your mouth. If HIV-infected cum or pre-cum gets in your mouth, it may get in your bloodstream through cuts in your gums or sores in your mouth.
- Use dental dams (latex squares) when going down on a woman if she is having her period or has a vaginal infection. Menstrual blood and secretions from vaginal infections have more HIV than healthy vaginal secretions or urine. No information has been gathered about the concentration of HIV in "female ejaculate."
- Use latex gloves for fisting or finger-fucking if you have any sores or cuts on your hands.
- Keep semen and blood (including menstrual blood and blood drawn from piercing, cutting or shaving) out of your vagina, anus, mouth, or breaks in your skin.
- If you share dildos, vibrators or other sex toys, use a new condom each time, or clean toys with hydrogen peroxide or soap and water.
- Alternative insemination may put you at risk. Discuss this risk with potential donors or sperm banks.
- Massage, hugging, dirty talk, role-playing, masturbation (solo, with a partner, in a group) and other activities that don't let blood or semen into your bloodstream are safe.
- Alcohol, poppers or other drugs may lower your ability to make good decisions. Many people have reported that they have been unable to maintain safer sex practices after getting high.
- Good nutrition, lots of rest, exercise and nonabuse of alcohol and other drugs may help you fight all illnesses, including AIDS.

INTRAVENOUS DRUG USE

- Don't share works (needles, syringes, droppers, spoons, cottons or cookers!)
- If you must share or re-use works, clean them before and after each injection as follows: dip needle and works into bleach, draw up and release three times, dip needle and works into fresh water, draw up and release three times. In an emergency, rubbing alcohol or vodka can be used instead of bleach. Or you can boil works that aren't plastic in water for at least 15 minutes. Use a fresh solution each time you clean your works.)

RESOURCE NUMBERS

National AIDS Hotline: 1 (800) 342-7514
AIDS Action Committee (AAC) Boston: 1 (800) 235-2331
Latino AIDS Hotline (bilingual), Boston: (617) 262-7248
AIDS Action Committee (AAC) IV Drug Use Taskforce, Boston: (617) 437-4200
Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), New York: (212) 807-6655
National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), Washington, D.C.: (202) 544-1076
Women's AIDS Network, San Francisco: (415) 864-4376

Finger Power

By David Scondras

In a short time, perhaps as soon as May 15, the Boston City Council will vote on the Family Protection Act (FPA). Without your help, your "finger power" on the phone this week, and the ballot box next fall, this law may not pass.

The FPA has the support of virtually every group in the gay, lesbian and bisexual community. It has also garnered the enthusiastic support of many churches, labor unions, women's groups, and other organizations concerned with fairness to all families.

The FPA says that domestic partnerships and extended families are to be recognized as families. It says that if you are willing to sign a document committing to share the necessities of life and to be responsible to each other, you are a family and you cannot be discriminated against.

The FPA means a person cannot be forbidden from visiting a dying lover because they are not "family." It means when a person in your family dies, you are able to attend the funeral, rather than being excluded by some administrator who determines which family members are "real" and decides that you are not.

The FPA recognizes the diversity of families in the city and treats them with respect and equality. Domestic partnerships, the elderly living with each other and caring for each other in the twilight of their lives, the non-traditional Hispanic families in which the role of "godfather" is so unique and crucial, two brothers together taking care of each other, a woman taking care of her aging mother, all of the many kinds of loving and caring families that make Boston strong and that provide the main basis of support for so many of us would be recognized by this law.

At a committee hearing we heard stories about a lesbian working for the city whose partner's child is not covered by benefits while she is expected to continue to support and subsidize the children of "traditional" families. We heard about a man who was denied visits to his partner of ten years at a

subtly played out in well-intentioned progressive media. Because the reporter interjected herself so vigorously into this story, her own race is a particularly relevant and important factor. In keeping with *GCN's* commitment to anti-racism, we urge you to make every effort to find reporters of color to handle such stories whenever possible in the future, and to ask white reporters covering such sensitive news to stick to reporting and refrain from editorializing.

Rhea Becker
Elly Bulkin
Stephanie Gilman
Suzi Hart
Patricia Kinsella
Madge McQueen
Pam Mitchell
Ann Russo
Barbara Schulman
for White Women Against Racism and
Violence Against Women
Boston, Mass.

All of us fall short

Dear *GCN*:

The Oprah Winfrey show on April 30th motivated me to write this letter.

On this show, several people were very quick to point out how wrong they believe gay people are for "choosing" their lifestyle.

Why would a person "choose" to be gay in a society that is so homophobic, in a day and age when gay-bashing and other hate-crimes are at an all-time high? What kind of people say AIDS is a "gay (and/or IV drug user) disease," despite continuing evidence to the contrary? What kind of people refuse to love their children, simply because they are gay?

I stayed closeted for much of my life, because I feared my family would condemn me for being homosexual. Four years later, there is still denial on my parents' behalf, but they do accept that I am their son, gay or not. I thank God for my parents, because I know so many people who do not talk with their families at all. That's a shame.

If one looks in the four Gospels (the books in the Bible giving accounts of the life of Jesus Christ), Jesus does not mention homosexuality. However, He does warn us about how destructive hate is, and He instructs us to love our neighbor. He gives us numerous examples illustrating love to "less than desirable" people. He did not just talk about love, He lived love.

Gay or not, we must love each other. Hate breeds more hate and alienates people. Hate

hospital because he was not a "member of the family." This law would put an end to these injustices.

The opposition has focused on everything except their real objection—that they don't respect gay relationships.

They have said that this law would cost the city too much money—perhaps \$5 million, or a one-half of one percent increase in the personnel budget, because it would extend health benefits equally to all families. In the seven years I have been a City Councillor, these people have never questioned the health care budget. They have never asked why we do not push a "menu" style benefits package which would save us more than the cost of justice for all families. They have ignored medical inflation, which costs much more every year than this law would ever cost us, and yet they are prepared to pay that cost.

They admit that they do not know how many marriages will happen over the next two years among the 19,000 workers in the city, but they are prepared to pay benefits for the spouse of every person who might get married, charging those of us who cannot marry money to subsidize those who can and do.

They admit that they do not know how many children will be born to the "right kind of family," but they are prepared to pay for that, and to have this most expensive of all health costs paid for by all of us whose own children are denied any help because we do not fit their definition of a "traditional" family.

They are prepared to continue to pay health benefits to the DIVORCED spouses of city workers until those spouses get remarried—but not to the actual committed partners of city workers who are taking care of their aging mothers and fathers at home. They will find the money for those they care about, but not those they discriminate against.

They know that Seattle and the other 17 cities that have laws like this have not experienced increases in cost of any significance. They know that Seattle (which is quite similar to Boston demographically),

gets us nowhere.

It is time we do some soul searching and try to live the example of love that Jesus gave us. This is not always easy, but He is the Son of God. He died for us, because all of us fall short of His example.

Scott Easterly
Fayetteville, Ark.

Allowed in the chapel

Dear *GCN*:

I am writing you today to call upon your help in a situation in the New Jersey prisons. I was just recently released after doing several years. During my time at Trenton State Prison I was always harassed, but never like at East Jersey State Prison. East Jersey is known throughout the world as the "scared straight prison"—Rahway. Believe me, it is not anything like its reputation. It is more like a kindergarten than a prison, except for the way they treat gays.

Shortly before I left, the prison administration harassed and went after a friend of mine, just because he was a friend of mine. They accused him of being gay and took his job away from him. He worked as the Chaplain's clerk there for several years without any problems before we were friends. Then it went even further, where the Chaplain and the Administration refused to allow gays to attend the chapel services.

I would appreciate your assistance publishing this letter so others would write the Chaplain and Administration about their policies prohibiting the gays from attending chapel services and the abuse they give gays throughout the prison. Not only gays, but the friends of gay people, too. If there is any place at all that we should be welcomed, particularly in a prison atmosphere, it should be in the Chapel.

If anyone would like to help, please write the Head Chaplain:

Chaplain Abdul Muhammad
Supervisor of Chaplaincy
East Jersey State Prison
Lock Bag "R"
Rahway, NJ 07065

And also write the Administrator/Warden:
Mr. Patrick Arvonio
Administrator
East Jersey State Prison
Lock Bag "R"
Rahway, NJ 07065

Thank you in advance for all your help and concern for prisoners.

In the struggle,
Moanna Carter
Trenton, NJ

with 10,000 city workers, had only 361 people register, of whom two-thirds were heterosexual. Among them, only 172 enrolled in medical plans, at a resulting cost of \$161,000.

The domestic partnership section of the FPA might cost \$200,000, an amount that is less than the line item for food in the police department budget. It is also less than the city spends storing documents like the City Council minutes for perusal by future generations of the words of wisdom uttered by myself or Dapper O'Neil. The city will spend seven times more money (\$1.4 million) to bury the dead in its public cemeteries it is willing to spend to keep the loving families of its gay, lesbian and bisexual families alive.

Those who oppose this bill on financial grounds are saying they cannot find, at the most, \$5 million in a budget this year of \$1,363,000,000 for fairness to city workers.

They are saying that the gay population of Boston, which contributes at least \$136 million to the city overall, should not receive simple justice for gay, lesbian and bisexual city workers—that the \$55 million a year gay people pay in property taxes should continue to be spent in ways that devalue gay relationships.

They are saying that we should contribute more than our fair share to every single city program, which we have always done with willingness and grace, but should not expect equal benefits, equal protection or respect.

We need to call and thank those who have committed to supporting justice for all families—Councillors Salerno, Bolling and Travaglini. We need to call the rest and tell them we expect, as taxpayers and voters, that they will stand up for fairness and equality if they expect to get our tax dollars and our votes. We need your finger power. Dial 725-3040 and tell the city council members that you expect fairness, you expect it now and you know how to use your finger to pull the levers of a voting machine.

Boston City Councillor David Scondras represents the Fenway and Mission Hill.

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Entrapment

Continued from page 1

Jacobsen's predisposition to receive child pornography can not be established, the postal investigation might be ruled unwarranted and invalid.

Government prosecutors have argued that Jacobsen's statement that he was "interested in teenage sexuality" constituted a predisposition to violate child pornography laws.

"Interest in teenage sexuality is real vague," said Moyer. "Is it clinical interest or purient interest? There is no logical connection between that statement and intent to break the law."

Moyer also questions the legitimacy of the techniques used by postal officials. "The ostensible purpose of the survey was to gain support to lobby for sexual freedom," said Moyer. "In that context, [Jacobsen's] response is completely innocent." He added, "They're probing someone's innermost thoughts and being so they can condemn him in front of a jury."

'Making crooks'

Representing the government, Solicitor General Kenneth Starr argues that a lack of "reasonable suspicion" in the undercover investigation could not invalidate Jacobsen's conviction. He maintains that none of the accused's constitutional rights were violated and that the conviction should stand on the grounds that Jacobsen had received child pornography through the mail.

Jacobsen's entrapment defense is not constitutionally-based. The common law notion of entrapment was developed by state courts and later adopted by federal courts. It is grounded in the theory that the legislative branch can not pass a statute that would call for the arrests of innocent people.

"A right to privacy includes being left alone by the government," said Moyer, "unless it is clear you are violating or planning to violate the law."

Moyer said he sees a need to clarify what constitutes "predisposition to commit a crime" in government investigations. "Judges are feeling pretty uneasy about government undercover activities wandering pretty far from the point," said Moyer, adding, "There ought to be some point to targeting an individual."

"I think this case raises the question of what we can allow our police to do and still remain a society where the presumption of innocence is intact," said Evan Wolfson, an attorney with the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Herbert Friedman, another attorney who has worked on the Jacobsen case, said that the government's position "announces the conclusion that everyone is always subject to investigation at any time for no reason." He called this a dangerous idea and said it "could lead to uncontrolled government investigation."

"Almost anyone can be lured into committing a so-called crime under certain circumstances," said Wolfson. "How much reign can we give police without giving up protection from their potential abuse and corruption?"

"They're supposed to be catching crooks," said Moyer. "Instead they're making crooks, then catching crooks."

—filed from Boston

March

Continued from page 3

participants at the May meeting refrained from making any further decisions about the organization or goals of the march. The next planning meeting is scheduled to take place in Chicago on Aug. 3. According to the interim national planning committee co-chair, Alan Rueckgaruer, march organizers are now concerned with getting as many people as possible to the Chicago meeting.

"Our biggest effort now is to get people's in-put and participation in the August meeting," said Rueckgaruer. "It is critical, however, that people know that they don't have to be present in Chicago to have their voices heard. It is definitely not a case of those with the big bucks get to go and plan everything," he told GCN.

San Francisco organizer Ewing said that the main concern that she and her constituents have is making the march and its organizing meetings accessible to all. "We're trying to get every face and every voice involved from the very beginning," she said. "Parity and accessibility are the key issues," she added. "We have to ensure that all people can go and that we help enable them to do it."

The executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), Urvashi Vaid, said that community activism will be central to the success of the march.

"Hopefully, the organizational process will bring in those people who ordinarily say 'I'm not political,'" Vaid told GCN, "and, after the march, those people will be so inspired and energized that they will go back motivated to do more for their own community."

Vaid also said that NGLTF is "behind the march 100 percent," but, she added, "we're not going to produce" it. "This march will be successful if we realize that everybody has to get involved," said Vaid. "With the amount of mobilization and fundraising it takes to put together a march of one million people, there's lots for everyone to do," she said.

—filed from Boston

Prisons

Continued from page 3

been sabotaged by local administrators," said Potler. "Prisoners are told to take control of their lives; and here they are doing it, and then being knocked down."

ACT UP and prisoners' advocates also want to see condoms made available to prisoners. Many states deny condoms on the grounds that sex in prison is a felony, but according to Greenspan, "No one has ever been taken to court for having sex in prison. It is not a question of sodomy laws, but prison rules against sex." She added, "And once they know a prisoner has HIV, then it's a bigger deal. By refusing to educate and provide condoms, the prisons themselves have created this situation." Coughlin refuses to allow condoms to be made available even though his own commissioner of health services supports condom distribution.

According to Flateau, DOCS has no plans to institute a condom distribution program. "We don't feel that we have to copy New York City in the way that we run our prison system," he said. "Every incoming inmate is told 'You should treat all inmates as if they were HIV positive and not engage in activities that could wind up giving you a death sentence.' Now having said that, why should [the commissioner] give them condoms?" asked Flateau.

ACT UP members also stress the need for prisoners to have access to experimental drug trials. Flateau said that prisoners are not allowed access to experimental drugs because "New York has a law that the only drugs inmates are permitted are those allowed to the general public." This is important he said, to keep prisoners from being used as guinea pigs. "We are protecting inmates from abuse," he added.

But Potler maintains that New York State and federal laws allow for HIV experimental therapies on prisoners who are seropositive. "Prisoners should have the opportunity to make a decision if they want to participate," she said. "There is nothing in the law that precludes this from happening. In fact, New York does have people in clinical trials right now."

More than 850 people in prisons have died of AIDS since 1981. In New York State, early release of prisoners can only be obtained through executive clemency—a pardon by the governor; only one person has ever been granted clemency. A medical parole bill in the state legislature that would permit prisoners with AIDS and other terminal illnesses to leave prison before completing their sentences is currently before the state legislature. ACT UP and other prison advocates would like to see the bill passed. When similar bills have been introduced in the past, however, they have failed.

ACT UP members said that even though Coughlin would not meet with them, the protest was a success in terms of drawing attention to problems that prisoners with HIV face. Most people know very little about prisoners or the impact of AIDS on the prison system, they observed.

As Greenspan stressed as the protest drew to a close, "Our thousands of sisters and brothers in prison need to hear about this demonstration. We need to support them behind the walls. They are the ones on the front line."

ACT UP

Continued from page 1

to expand a broad-based coalition struggle for an overhauled national health-care system.

Chicago's ACT UP chapter plans to "Slay the AMA" during the American Medical Association's convention June 24; Maine activists will zap U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan May 25; and Los Angeles activists are working with New Yorkers to plan civil disobedience during an October rally here, leading up to a massive spring march next year.

Because of the failure of private insurers to provide access to medical care, ACT UP demands the establishment of a national health care program that will guarantee care for all, regardless of residence or employment status. "Private insurers have been long-time opponents of such a program," said Zabcik.

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Focusing on women and AIDS

The little-talked-about plight of women in the epidemic is addressed by a recent conference in Boston



CHRIS JANSKY

At the safer sex workshop *What Goes Down is Up to You*

By Christine Jansky

It has been 10 years since the *New York Times* published its first article about what we now call AIDS. Back then it was known as "the gay cancer," or Gay-Related Immune Deficiency. Even though the nomenclature no longer reflects this sort of bias, the health care system of the United States and the federal government funding sources have been much slower in waking up to this fact. In fact, for the most part, the little-discussed plight of women with AIDS remains all but ignored.

This is not to take away from the devastating effects the AIDS epidemic has had on the gay male community, or to minimize the obstacles AIDS activists have faced in order to get the attention and funding they deserved. But as the Fenway Community Health Center (FCHC), a Boston organization that recently co-sponsored a conference specifically designed to focus on women and AIDS, stated in a handout: "If the 'band played on' for gay men as Randy Shilts states in his book documenting the government's neglect of the AIDS epidemic, then the conductor has yet to lift his baton for HIV infected women."

In an attempt to help remedy this situation, the FCHC joined forces with the Boston AIDS Consortium and Boston's AIDS Action Committee to co-sponsor the third Women and AIDS Conference, subtitled "Keeping Women in Focus." Approximately 800 people from all over the country attended the conference, held April 19-20, which featured over 150 speakers. Health care and social service providers, educators, counselors, psychotherapists, researchers and all whose lives have been affected by the AIDS epidemic were encouraged to attend.

With as many as 14 to 16 workshops taking place simultaneously in three or four 90-minute time slots per day, a myriad of information was presented. This was augmented by strategy sessions, information tables, and opening and closing speakers. It was evident that the conference was designed to help address the effects of the AIDS epidemic on women in diverse communities. It was also evident that participants were encouraged to link the challenges posed by AIDS with the many other factors that shape women's lives.

The titles of the workshops showed that the conference planners attempted to shine the spotlight on as many segments of the women and HIV spectrum as possible. These included: "Clinical Issues in the Psychological Treatment of Women with AIDS," "Women, Prison and HIV," "Serving Women and Children with HIV Infection," "Case Management Services for HIV-Positive Black and Latina Women," "Sex Workers: Women at Risk," "Sexual Concerns of Women Recovering From Addiction," "Women with AIDS in Substance Abusing Family Systems," "Gay Black Women and HIV Disease," "HIV Infected Health Care Workers," "Legal Needs of Low-Income HIV-Positive Women," "Lesbians Working in the Field of AIDS," "Mothers of People with AIDS," "Wet, Wild and Well: Initiating Lesbian-Oriented HIV Education," and "Psychosocial Stresses and Moral Dilemmas for Infected, Southern, Inner-city, African-American Women and Their Caregivers," among others. It seemed that if anyone was left out, perhaps there would be something close to what they were experiencing—or at least someone to share information with.

Choosing panels

I found it difficult to choose from the many topics being explored at any given time. At first frustrated by this, I gradually realized what a wonderful thing it was: there was so much being talked about, so many different kinds of people receiving attention and being addressed and tended to. Realizing I could only be in one place at one time, I chose panel called "Lesbian Exclusion from HIV Education: Ten Years of Low Risk Identity and High Risk Behavior" that was held on Friday afternoon.

I probably decided on this topic because it resonated within me, it echoed something I already know: I know that women are grossly and blatantly ignored by the medical profession and the government when it comes to health care, when it comes to AIDS, and when it comes to our lives. With the AIDS epidemic, women are being allowed to die much sooner after diagnosis (if such a diagnosis occurs at all) than men.

It doesn't take an extremely politically aware person or someone heavily schooled in medical science to figure this out. While living in Baltimore a year ago, I found myself a bit low on cash. Perusing the help wanted ads, I was attracted to those that

promised \$200 for a two-and-a-half day medical study. These studies usually involved blood sampling after marijuana ingestion or the taking of some experimental drug. Although I wasn't exactly thrilled at the thought of possibly having a foot growing out of my pelvic bone in 20 years or of my eyes suddenly turning yellow because of a drug that I took for some medical research project while in my twenties, I needed the money.

But I quickly found out that I couldn't get the money, because almost all of these studies were looking exclusively for male participants. At first I was angry about the money because I needed it very badly (although I'm a little relieved now that I never participated: the yellow eye theory); but the more I thought about the politics of the situation, the angrier I got. These drug studies were not being done on women, and if the drugs successfully passed the trial system, they would be marketed and utilized by the medical profession for both men and women.

But what if women's bodies did not respond in the same way to these drugs? What if these drugs had an adverse effect and proved damaging or even fatal to women? Why wasn't anyone talking about this? Why wasn't anyone outraged? It was blatant, right there in the back of the papers in most cities with medical school hospitals: women were being ignored: women weren't allowed to participate; women weren't the norm; women weren't important enough.

Slowly I began to see these issues being discussed, primarily in the pages of the alternative press. (Some of these articles were reproduced and included in handouts at the Women and AIDS Conference.) They generally reflected the lack of concern for women by the medical profession: one examined women and cancer; another spoke of women and AIDS. All of the articles examined a society that does not value the existence of women. On the lowest, most simple level, it's annoying. On the highest, most infuriating level, women are dying.

Sarah Schulman's *Village Voice* article, "Delusions of Gender," was one of the first to catch my attention and reassured me that I wasn't alone in my concerns. Schulman reported that thousands of HIV-positive women "are denied disability and other AIDS benefits because their illness does not meet government standards." In a world that doesn't value women, is it a surprise that illness alone is not enough to guarantee

medical attention and care? Schulman showed that women have to pass tests, be "ill enough" to qualify for attention. She pointed out, "The U.S. Centers for Disease Control's official definition of AIDS requires individuals to have HIV plus at least one from a list of opportunistic infections or cancers. The list, which is derived from studies of gay men, does not include gynecological infections such as vaginal thrush or pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). Even life-threatening diseases like cervical cancer are omitted."

I knew about this structure before I got to the conference. After I got there, I learned how the particulars of women and AIDS are affected by this same structure. What I also learned from the conference was that there is plenty of information out there; there are plenty of people who care and are talking about this and doing something about it out of concern. Because of the plenitude of information offered about women and AIDS, it is difficult to choose which facets are most important to mention; some things may be more important to me than to someone else.

One of the key issues discussed at the conference was the damaging effect of identifying lesbians as a "low risk group." Ten years into the epidemic, it seems obvious that there is tremendous danger in identifying any group of people as "low-risk." It is medically irresponsible to lead people to believe that the same guidelines and behaviors for avoiding HIV infection may not apply to a group that they identify with. In the past this has led to a laziness in providing information (and obtaining information regarding such guidelines), which can lead to people who thought they were at "low-risk" becoming HIV positive.

Rebecca Cole and Sally Cooper of *AIDS Treatment Resources* in New York spoke at the "Lesbian Exclusion from HIV Education" workshop, and offered a handout of a "Seicus Report" they wrote in Dec. 1990/Jan. 1991. Cole, who is the associate director of the Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation, the only exclusively lesbian foundation in the country, was quick to name the source of much of the confusion regarding lesbians and AIDS. "AIDS is not our biggest problem," she said, "lesbian hate is. We're not just feared, we're hated." And to make matters worse, she asserted, "we hate ourselves." This further leads to a communication problem with "everyone competing with information."

In spite of the difficult problems Cole and Cooper pointed out, Cole still managed to be upbeat about the prospects of women sharing information. Her main suggestion is that we invent new ways to talk to each other, as women and as lesbians, so that we can share the massive amount of information that is available — without the seemingly requisite fighting with each other.

To that end, writer Wickie Stamps spoke as a member of the lesbian S/M community. "Part of safe sex is access to information," said Stamps. "It's being able to see yourself affirmed in sexual images of who you are." Stamps said that she was prompted to speak because of a lack of information about the S/M community, and because she felt that there was something she could give.

Stamps stressed that while there is "a lot of safer sex work being done within the S/M community that wasn't being recognized," health care providers still "need to help us."

Stamps provided valuable information that clearly demonstrated how unfortunate it is that differences separate us when so many problems we face as a community transcend those differences. Although the S/M community has been "leading in safe sex practices and keeping sex hot," there has been a lack of recognition of this key role. Stamps pointed out that the S/M community is an "invisible community" that has "implemented safe sex guidelines and kept the idea of eroticism alive."

Stamps also pointed out that while it is important for members of the S/M community to state that identity when seeking health care, there is often a complete lack of understanding on the part of many providers. She explained that the risks of this sort of

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE



MARIDEE BONADEA

'The point is we tried'

The National Lesbian Conference was at times contentious, at times victorious

By Maridee BonaDea

The major victory of the National Lesbian Conference (NLC), held in Atlanta April 24-28, was the success of efforts at inclusion of lesbians from beyond what many see as the predominantly white, middle-class lesbian movement. The presence of women of color, differently-abled women and poor women among the approximately 3000 women who attended reflected the theme of the conference itself, which was "Diversity, Solidarity and Empowerment." Many of the organizers attributed the diversity of the conference to a parity rule used for all conference decision-making.

At the same time, many people connected with the conference—as well as many attendees—agreed that what bogged down the event was this same parity rule. All decision-making groups connected with the conference were mandated to consist of 50 percent lesbians of color, 20 percent lesbians with disabilities, and five percent older lesbians—which, for the sake of the NLC, meant over 50 years old. If this parity was not met, the decision being attempted by the given group was tabled.

Early in the planning stages of the NLC, a steering committee made up of lesbians from all over the country was created utilizing this parity rule. Later, when a paid staff was hired in Atlanta for the conference, the steering committee became responsible for setting conference policy, and was empowered to direct the staff to carry out.

Janet Spotted Eagle was involved enthusiastically in the early stages of the NLC and was present at the first general planning meeting in Durham, N.C., more than two years ago. Her enthusiasm continued through a general meeting held in Portland, Ore., a few months after that. But her statement in the program book for the NLC proper spoke of being discouraged and of not wanting to create any false hope for her Native American sisters. When asked what happened to her enthusiasm, she told *GCN*, "They take that away from you, and it's not just white lesbians." Spotted Eagle believes one of the positive changes that has come about since she wrote her program statement was how welcomed and included Native American lesbians felt at the NLC, unlike other events within the dominant lesbian community.

However, Spotted Eagle had other concerns about the conference, many of them logistical. She felt that the relationship between the steering committee and the paid staff was not as successful as it was designed to be. She said that often the decision-making

process was left up to the paid staff. She also felt that holding the conference at the Hilton and Radisson hotels was beyond the financial means of many lesbians.

In spite of logistical problems, however, the conference was off the ground and running on Wednesday. Jewish lesbians, a group calling itself Young Women Committed to Action, lesbians of size and lesbians of color were among the many groups holding caucuses. The lesbians of color caucus came up with plans for a national lesbian newsletter, discussed the cancelling of a Latina lesbian caucus at the NLC, and plans for a lesbians of color conference to be held in 1993.

Before and after each speaker, people from the audience would get up and talk about an issue concerning the conference itself.

Terra Williams, a member of the steering committee, spoke of a conflict that came up when too many lesbians of color caucuses were scheduled simultaneously. She attributed this to the NLC's last-minute giving up of space at a third hotel.

Anti-oppression workshops and trainings began Thursday morning and ran through Sunday. In the afternoons, other types of workshops were planned, although the fact that schedules were released day by day caused some confusion. Among the afternoon workshops were "Lesbians in Queer Nation," "Lesbian Hate Crimes," and "What Does Class Have to Do With It?"

Plenaries and pre-plenaries were planned for Thursday on. Pre-plenaries were billed as afternoon sessions of discussion and decision making "specifically designed to move us closer to a national lesbian agenda."

Evening plenaries featured speakers discussing specific topics. But processing the conference itself became a spontaneous priority at all plenaries and pre-plenaries.

The Two Spirited Dance Troupe, a Native American company, was scheduled to open the Thursday night plenary session. However, in solidarity with Spotted Eagle, the group did not perform. By this time Spotted Eagle had her own schedule changed so many times without being consulted that she decided to opt out.

The topic of the Thursday night plenary was ageism. The featured speakers were Barbara MacDonald from the Old Lesbian Organizing Committee and Joyce Hunter, also an old lesbian and a conference organizer. Hunter gave 10 minutes of her scheduled speaking time to a lesbian under 21, so that the other end of the ageism spectrum could be included.

Before and after each speaker, people from the audience would get up and talk about an issue concerning the conference itself. Several women addressed the invisibility of Latina lesbians. A group of Latina lesbians announced that they would prepare a statement to be read at Friday's plenary.

Jewish lesbians held a Shabbat onstage before Friday's plenary. Some observers made what were perceived as anti-Israeli comments about the Palestinian conflict and the fact that religion should not have been a part of the conference. Mel Bramyn, a Jewish lesbian separatist who was a paid staff member of the NLC and who had written an anti-Semitism statement in the NLC program, said that she felt these remarks were anti-Semitic. She also stated her support for dual statehood in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and asserted the right of Jewish people to practice their religion.

During Friday night's session, Joan Gardner, a senior advisor to Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, brought greetings from the mayor's office. This was interesting in light of the concerns many organizers had over holding the conference in a state where sodomy laws were upheld in the Supreme Court's infamous *Hardwick* decision.

A group of Latina lesbians read their position statement, which summed up the organizational confusion many conference-goers were complaining about in the hallways on the way to workshops. The statement, which was handed out later, read:

We are enraged! As program coordinator, Angelo Acevedo submitted an approved agenda over a month ago. This schedule was sabotaged, resulting in disruption for everyone in general and invisibility for Latinas in particular. The disruption caused has damaged the reputation of long-standing

dedicated organizers. This demonstrated a lack of respect for their work and the group process. The invisibility of Latinas occurred when we did not even appear on the conference schedule, again showing a lack of respect, otherwise known as RACISM. This action of the parity committee did not honor the decision of the governing body—the NLC steering committee. We demand Latina space and—respect for our Latina voices.

Friday's plenary session was "Homophobia: Cultural Perspectives." The first speaker was Carmen Vasquez, a Puerto Rican woman who serves on the board of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. As before, conference-goers spoke between speakers to process what was happening at the conference. After Vasquez spoke, women of color tried to get to the microphone. Mel Bramyn, who was facilitating the plenary, diverted the women and continued the program. This was one of the most tense moments of the conference.

Next, Trinity Ordon, a Filipina-American woman, presented a slide show that had been exhibited for the first time at the first Asian Pacific Islander Lesbian conference held in Santa Cruz, Calif., in 1989. During the slide shows women were having an ad hoc meeting. The audience sat through the slide show, wondering what was going to happen next. After the slide show, approximately 60 women of color moved to the stage in an effort to talk to someone accountable about conference scheduling. The group said that they were tired of the disorganization. A woman on stage announced, "This is not a racist issue."

A group of women from the paid staff and the steering committee came to the stage to answer questions. This was a diverse group of lesbians of color, disabled lesbians, Jewish lesbians and white lesbians. Scheduled speakers who had not yet spoken left the stage for the ensuing discussion, which lasted late into the night. A decision was made to have a plenary session Saturday afternoon to discuss the organizational problems and to further process what was going on at the conference.

At every pre-plenary session, the issue of a national lesbian organization and a national lesbian agenda came up. Organizers had not set up a specific agenda or listed suggestions for the latter, so this was left for conference participants to conceive over the event's four days. By Saturday night, most attendees had given up on the notion of a national agenda or organization coming out of the NLC.

Members of the press covering the NLC for gay, lesbian and straight media outlets had their own issues. Flash photography was not allowed as a matter of conference policy. Many photographers asked at the beginning of workshops if flash photography was acceptable to members of the smaller groups, and generally it was.

A press room was set up at the Hilton, which was usually empty except for a spur-of-the-moment caucus on Thursday for press women. The caucus pushed for a press conference with organizers to answer questions. The press conference came together Saturday afternoon. Because the press conference consisted of a small number of people, some of the clearest discussion of conference organizational problems happened. Members of the steering committee and the paid staff were present to respond to criticisms.

Stephanie Jo Kent, a member of the Post-Event Committee (PEC), responded with a written critique of organizational problems, which was distributed at the press conference. Kent, a 27-year-old white lesbian, was the youngest organizer of the conference. The major points in her critique were that conference planning had lacked continuity—only three lesbians (Janet Spotted Eagle, MP Schildmeyer and Stephanie Jo Kent) were consistently present at decision-making meetings—and the somewhat ineffective parity rule. According to Kent, lesbians of color on decision-making bodies had almost exclusively been Black.

As a member of the PEC, which consisted of people who had originally made up an interim decision making body before the steering committee was constituted, Kent shared her hope in a message at the beginning of her critique.

"After two years of struggle," she wrote, "the PEC reaffirms its belief in and commitment to the values and philosophy (Diversity, Solidarity and Empowerment) of the National Lesbian Conference. Although the following is a list of things that could be described as the things we did wrong, some of them were more wrong than others, and many were almost right. The point is that we tried and in trying have come closer to realizing the dream of a world of equality and freedom; a world of cooperation, not competition; a world resonant with the soft power of women." □

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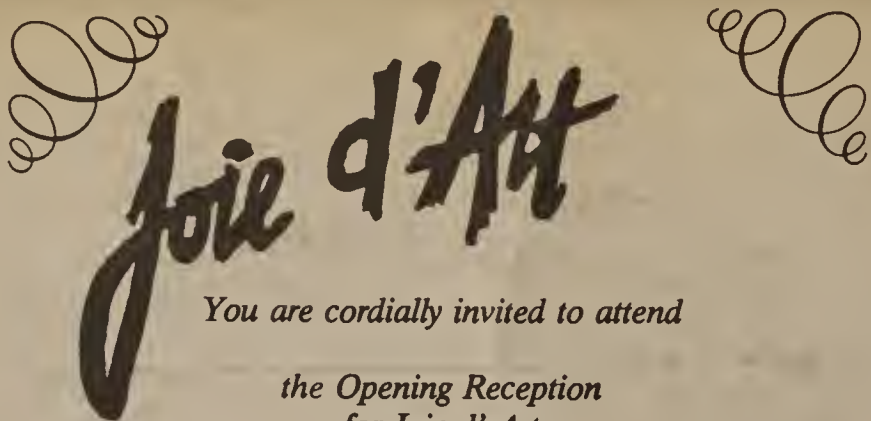
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SURVEY

- What we know vs. what we do
- Reasons for unsafe sex
- Unsafe anal sex: among HIV- & HIV+ gay men!
- Federal policy, funding restrictions & our lives
- What this means for you

Tuesday, June 4, 1991
6:30-8:30 PM
Boston Public Library
Rabb Auditorium
666 Boylston Street, Boston

Panelists:

Michael Cronin
ACT UP and Greater Boston
Lesbian & Gay Political Alliance
Belinda Rochelle
Health Issues Lobbyist, National
Gay and Lesbian Task Force
Jack Vondras
Manager of Community Education,
AIDS ACTION Committee

Moderator:

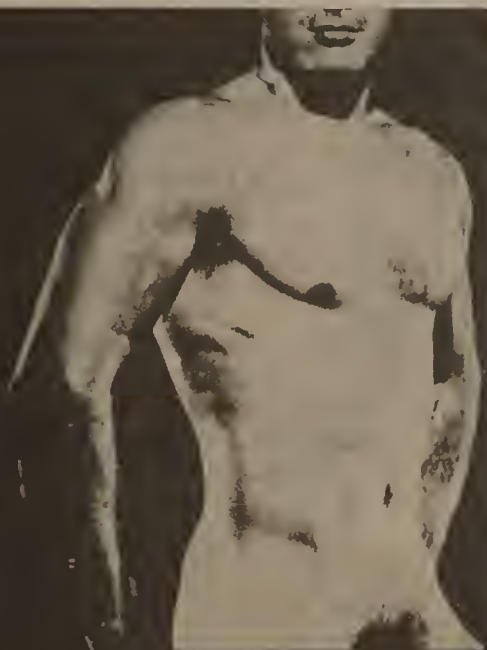
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ANONYMOUS COUNTERPART AND LOCAL LAWYER

Got your letter too late. I wrote back, but P.O. Box was closed. Would really like to meet you. Please try again. Shy Physicist, Box 500 (fr 45)

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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War Resisters League Training Program for Organizers. August 9-18, 1991. Cost: \$275-\$450, sliding scale. Program held in Western Massachusetts. To receive an application and brochure, contact WRL, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012. Apply by June 1.

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If you are a lesbian or a bisexual woman and you have a female twin, we would like for you to participate in a study on the development of sexual orientation. We desire your participation whether your twin is identical or non-identical, and regardless of her sexual orientation. Please call collect for further information. Family Studies Laboratory, Department of Psychology, Northwestern University, 708-491-4239, or 708-866-0924.

DO YOU HAVE AN ADOPTIVE SISTER?

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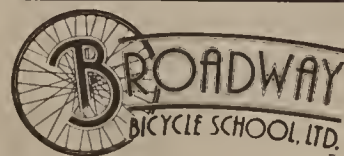
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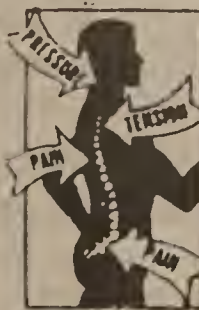
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☐ SUMMER RENTALS

☐ MASSAGE

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(40)

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PRISONERS SEEKING FRIENDS

LAYOUT DATE: 5/16/91

Bi man looking to correspond with other Bi men and women. Seeking friendship, intimacy, fun. Enjoy reading, drawing, wilderness. Bobby L. Thomas, 193642, Box 500, Smyrna, DE 19977.

Gay Italian in need of a friend who likes to write long, sexy letters and is a real person. Albert Citro, 90T5183, Cossackie Corr. Facility, Box 999, Cossackie, NY 12051-0999

Articulate individual wanted by prisoner being released in December. Into movies, long walks, Bette Midler. All letters answered; I'm an equal opportunity "fag." Dwayne Brown, 30966-060, 3600 Gaurd Rd, Lompoc, CA 93436

I need a friend to form a relationship. AIDS, HIV, ARC no barrier. INTO philosophy, the arts and sciences. J.L. Paxson, Man CI R128417/51076, Box 788 Mansfield, OH 44901-0288

Looking for intelligent, sincere relationship. thanks. John Philbrick, 076711, 583, Charlotte Corr. Inst., 33123 Oilwell Rd, Punta Gorda, FL 33955

Dear Robert C. from Birmingham, Joe S. from Derby lost your address. Please write. Also anyone who could donate stamps, I need them to write for information on AIDS for myself and friends here who are HIV-positive. Anyone who could send cards to a few HIV-positive inmates for support, please write and I'll forward names and mailbox numbers. Chris W. Rusan, 082924-665, Dade CI, 19000 S.W. 377th St, Florida City, FL 33034

Through a long tunnel to thoughts I search for you, walking in a mist of lightly falling rain. Where are you? You are feminine, wanting a real love and getting out of prison by April 1993. Write Terry Drake, 14162, Box 28, Pendleton, IN 46064

I'm into sports, weightlifting and the great outdoors. Will be released in 30 months. Any queens or effeminate males looking for a penpal need look no farther. Bernie Farmer, 164500, Box 900 JCCC, Jefferson City, MO 65102

Gay man needs someone to write. I'll be out in December 1992. Steve Grimes, A-507364, AC-WL, TCI, 3950 Tiger Bay Rd, Daytona Beach, FL 32124

Gay male would like to correspond with other gay men from SF Bay Area. Into music, photography. If you'd like to start a relationship, drop me a line. Richard Dreis, Box 2500-38678, Lincoln, NE 68502

Gay male prisoner seeking to correspond with gay males. Am not allowed to write other prisoners. Albert Tomasso, 94816-024, Box 1000, Oxford WI 53952

GM into skiing, camping, early rock 'n roll, curious about CD and B/D seeking correspondence and possible relationship. Scott Konitzer, Kettle Moraine Corr. Inst., Box 31, Plymouth WI 53073. Can't write other prisoners.

Looking for a penpal. Paul D. Allen, 651 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

GM from San Francisco stuck in the land of Oz. Looking for love and affection from TV/TS on outside. Free in 1992. Write to Wesley Benolt, 37307, Box 2, Lansing KS 66043

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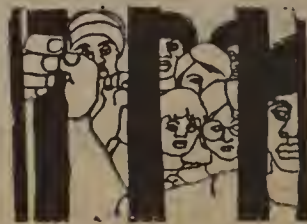
Alexander Berkman,

Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist

Women Seeking Friends



I'm a bisexual woman doing three and a half years. Will be out in May of 1992. I'm looking for a writing companion. Please write Laura Thompson, #A731100, P.O. Box 8540, #222, Pembroke Pines, FL 33024. BCL



I'm a pre-op/TS, lonely and in need of a friend. I enjoy poetry, country music and the beach. All letters answered. Write Dennis "Rhonda" Smlth, Martin Corr. Inst., 1150 SW Allupattah Rd, Indiantown, FL 34956-4397-244

Interested in poetry, sports, the outdoors and sincere relationship. I've got a year left and am looking to relocate. Bernard Hughes, D-22473, Box 7500 D-5-121, Crescent City, CA 95531

I need a friend to write to. I'm mellow, a good person with a good heart. Become a friend with me. Howard Stork, D-59689, Box 400 "F#218 up, Tracy, CA 95376

I'm a Pisces, into fishing, dancing, all outdoor activities. Will answer all letters. Charles F. Bean, B812731 R-3, Apalchee Corr. Inst., Box 699-W, Sneads, FL 32460

I seek a special TR who lives in Calif, and who is interested in meeting a fun, Mexican-Yaque inmate. Write Pete Orazco, C27960, Box 7500, shu C 12-C112U, Crescent City, CA 95531

Please write to a lonely, sexy, Italian inmate. Will answer all. John Keough, 86A3627, Box AG, Fallsburg, NY 12733

I'm a gay man, a "lifer", and would like to write to other gays. Charles Vidal, C-21241, Box 8101 #1235, San Luis Obispo, CA 93409

GM who loves sex, outdoors, computers, sports, wants penpal. Soon to be released. Robert Graham, 83219-012, 3600 Guard Rd, Lompoc CA 93436

GM seeks sincere friendship. I have only 5 months to go in prison. Would like to hear from those outside. Am feminine, sensual, romantic. Gerald M. Johnson, 117761, Beaver 2-A-1. Hunt Corr. Center, POB 174, St. Gabriel LA 70776

I request a sincere an honest penpal for a friend. I'll be out by fall 91. John Philbrick, 076711, Polk Corr. Inst., Box 50, 3876 Evans Rd, Polk City, FL 33868

I'm a trans-operative TS seeking someone to write to. I love people, fixing hair and makeup, swimming, biking. Would really like to meet someone lesbian or gay, male or female. Ricky Shana Chamblee, EH 173935 A-1-33, Box 310 UCI, Valdosta GA 31603

Athletic and health-conscious gay prisoner in search of that unique and special someone. My release is Feb. 1992. Please write Anthony "Campy" Campanile #04736-050, Box 1000, Lewisburg, PA 17837



29 Wednesday Boston ♦ “Bent” opens at the Triangle Theater. Martin Sherman’s drama of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals. Performances through 6/22, Wednesday through Saturday evenings. Seats \$15. Tickets through BosTix, Ticketron, or Wednesdays after 7:15 p.m.426-3550. (l-r) Michael Keamy, Michael Harrington, Brian Dusseau

Calendar listings must be received by the Monday before the week of the event. Photos encouraged! Please specify if event is or is not wheelchair accessible and/or sign language interpreted. Please use our format as a guide for listings. All listings must be typed. Please note that listings are printed only as space allows; we regret that we cannot print every submission. No phone calls, please! Phone numbers listed are in the 617 area code, and non-major cities are in Massachusetts, unless otherwise noted.

18 SATURDAY

Cambridge ♦ “Once Upon Our Time”: Multicultural Story Hour for Children (3-8) of G/L Parents and Friends. Third Saturday each month. New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St., Inman St. 10 to 11:15 a.m. Limited space. Sign up: Marian or Jenifer 267-0900.

Boston ♦ “How to Date a Man, Part II.” Malcolm McKay. AAC, 131 Clarendon St., 4th flr. Free admission, but limited space, so register: 437-6200 x499.

Boston ♦ Joie d’Art Exhibit. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., 5/18 and 5/19. L/G Comm. Ctr., 338 Newbury St. 262-7760.

Danvers ♦ North Shore G/L Alliance Conf. on Women’s Issues. 1 to 5 p.m. N. Shore Unitarian Univ. Church, 323 Locust St. (Rte. 35). 745-3848.

Haverhill ♦ Sensual Spiritual Lesbian Poetry. Bring 40 copies of your lesbian art/poetry to make take-home book. Wear no perfumes or other scented products. Womyn only. 1 p.m. Radzukina’s, 714 N. Broadway. 521-1333.

Boston ♦ Prime Timers: “Cruises and Gay Resort Vacations.” Older gay men. 2 to 4 p.m. Lindemann Health Ctr., 25 Staniford St.

Boston ♦ Lesbian Fun and Games. Smoke and alcohol-free. 338 Newbury St. 7 to 10p.m. Third Saturday each month. \$2 donation.

Cambridge ♦ Lesbian Singles Meet. 7 p.m. DOB, Old Camb. Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. \$1. 661-3633.

Boston ♦ Joie d’Art L/G Pride Kickoff Party. To kick off Pride Month activities. Live entertainment by Lea Zicari. \$5. 7 to 10 p.m. L/G Comm. Ctr., 338 Newbury St. 262-7760.

Watertown ♦ GLOW Pizza Party. G/L of Watertown, all welcome. Info: Becky 395-4664 or Larry 924-0095.

Jamaica Plain ♦ L/G Contra/Square Dancing. Smoke / drug free. 8 to 11 p.m.; beginners’ lessons 7:30 p.m. First Church of J.P., corner Centre and Eliot Sts. Band: \$6. \$5. Info and directions: Janet 522-2216, Phil 729-9206, or Scott 536-2014.

Boston ♦ Mike Doty reads from “Bethlehem in Broad Daylight.” Glad Day Bookshop, 673 Boylston (across from Copley library). 8 p.m. 267-3010.

19 SUNDAY

Cambridge ♦ Lesbian Writers’ Group. 1 to 3 p.m. DOB, Old Camb. Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. \$1. 661-3633.

Cambridge ♦ Becky Birta reads from “The Forbidden Poems.” An African-American lesbian feminist. New Words, 186 Hampshire St. 876-5310.

Provincetown ♦ Judith McDaniel reads from “Just Say Yes.” Now Voyager, 357 Commercial St. 3 p.m. (508) 487-0848.

Boston ♦ Dykes Dialogue: “Relationships and Contracts.” 4 p.m. L/G Comm. Ctr., 338 Newbury St. 247-2927.

Boston ♦ 13th Annual Auction to Benefit Mass. G/L Political Coalition. 5 p.m. Club Cafe, 209 Columbus Ave. Varied, interesting, and influential invited guests. Should be fun! 262-1565.

SE Mass ♦ SMUUGLe: S.E. Mass Unitarian Universalist G/L/etc. Third Sunday each month in various south-of-Boston locs. 344-7030.

Boston ♦ Dennis Cooper reads from “Frisk.” Glad Day Bookshop, 673 Boylston (across from Copley library). 7 p.m. 267-3010.

Jamaica Plain ♦ Deb Margolin: “Of All the Nerve.” A founding member of Split Britches. 8 p.m. Next Stage, 64 Wyman St. Tickets \$10 advance, \$12 at door. Tickets 497-1118. Info: 524-0971.

20 MONDAY

Hanover, NH ♦ Panelmaking Workshops for the AIDS Memorial Quilt. First and third Mondays each month. Lutheran Church, 5 Summer St. 7 p.m. Info: Thom (603) 632-4145.

Cambridge ♦ Lesbian Partners and Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors. Women’s Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 7 to 8:30 p.m. 354-8807.

Boston ♦ Queer Nation/Boston. Community Church

of Boston, Copley Square above Back Bay Bistro. 7:30 p.m., first and third Mondays each month. Info: 577-8123.

Cambridge ♦ “Oppression and Liberation,” a presentation and discussion on liberation theology and its relevance to l/g liberation. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Old Camb. Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 864-8068.

Cambridge ♦ Lesbians 20 and Under Meet. 8 p.m. DOB, Old Camb. Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. \$1. 661-3633.

Cambridge ♦ Lesbian Rap: “Bisexuality.” Women’s Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 8 to 10 p.m. 354-8807.

21 TUESDAY

Framingham ♦ Framingham G/L Youth Group. People 22 and under, meets first and third Tuesdays each month. Civic League Bldg., 214 Concord St. 6 to 7:30 p.m. Info: write P.O. Box 426, S. Framingham, MA 01701.

Cambridge ♦ 30+ Lesbian Rap: “Sing Along (bring songs).” Women’s Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 7 to 8:30 p.m. 354-8807.

Boston ♦ Support group for lesbian and single women interested or involved in alternative insemination. First Tuesday each month: women not yet inseminating. Second Tuesday: those who have inseminated 1-8 times. Third Tuesday: those who have inseminated 9+ times. 7 to 8:30 p.m. Second flr. conf. rm., FCHC, 7 Haviland St. Info: Jenifer Firestone 267-0900.

Boston ♦ “Say It Loud”: Local authors read selections from “Bi Any Other Name.” 7 p.m. L/G/BI Comm. Ctr., 338 Newbury St. 247-2927.

Cambridge ♦ Bisexual Women’s Rap: “Butch / Femme Roles.” Women’s Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. 354-8807.

Cambridge ♦ Lesbian Coming-Out Stories and Panelists. 8 p.m. DOB, Old Camb. Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. \$1. 661-3633.

Boston ♦ Gay Fathers of Greater Boston: Gay Pride Discussion: Don’t Let the Parade Pass You By. 8 to 10 p.m. Lindemann Ctr., 25 Staniford St. 742-7897.

Boston ♦ Partners of Gay Fathers. Inaugural meeting, concurrent with Gay Fathers of Greater Boston. 8 p.m. Boston Room, Lindemann Ctr., 25 Staniford St. Info: Steve Shuman 267-7299.

22 WEDNESDAY

Boston ♦ Coming Out Support Group. The Center, 338 Newbury St. Second and fourth Wednesday each month. 8 p.m. Info: 247-2927.

23 THURSDAY

Jamaica Plain ♦ “Domestic Partnership: Should This Be Our Next Struggle?” G/L Labor Activists Network. 6 to 7 p.m. poduck dinner; 7 to 8:30 p.m. discussion. 7 Jamaica Place. Info: Pat 524-6617.

Cambridge ♦ Drop in at DOB Coffee Night. 7 to 9:30 p.m. Old Camb. Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. \$1. 661-3633.

Boston ♦ FCHC Living Well Series: Kundalini Yoga, The Ancient Science of Immune Regeneration. 7 to 9 p.m. Boston Living Ctr., YWCA 7th flr., 140 Clarendon. 267-0900 x287.

24 FRIDAY

Vermont ♦ Chiltern Mtn. Club Biking in Vt.’s Northeast Kingdom. Details: Lisa 625-2689.

Boston ♦ 1991 Boston G/L AA Roundup (with Al-Anon Participation). Northeastern U., Huntington Ave. 5/24, 25, 26, and 27. Info: Mary S. 524-8040 or Danny F. 536-6739.

Boston ♦ Friday Night Video Series: “My Beautiful Laundrette.” 7 p.m. G/L Comm. Ctr., 338 Newbury. 247-2927.

25 SATURDAY

Vermont ♦ Chiltern Mtn. Club Long Trail Backpack. Spectacular views guaranteed. 27.5 mi. Details: Mike (603) 644-7658.

S. Hadley ♦ Mt. Holyoke Lesbian Alumnae Reunion. Also 6/1. Details: Donna 265-0124.

Watertown ♦ DOB Women’s Tennis. All abilities. Free. Courts behind Arsenal Mall, Arsenal St. 9 a.m. 628-1038.

Boston ♦ Slow Dancing at the Center. 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., fourth Saturday each month. Slow dancing lesson 10:30 p.m. by Jason Thomas. G/L Comm. Ctr., 338 Newbury St. 247-2927.

26 SUNDAY

Boston ♦ AMALGM Monthly Men’s Meeting. (AMALGM = Assoc. of Mass. Asian L/GM.) Last Sunday each month. The Center, 338 Newbury St., room 202K. Info: 247-2927.

Boston ♦ Dykes Dialogue: “Transsexuals and Dykes: A Dialogue.” 4 p.m. L/G Comm. Ctr., 338 Newbury St. 247-2927.

28 TUESDAY

Cambridge ♦ 30+ Lesbian Rap: “PRIDE — Our Holiday.” Women’s Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 7 to 8:30 p.m. 354-8807.

Boston ♦ Buddy Program Orientation, AIDS ACTION Committee. Volunteers needed to provide emotional and practical support to AAC clients on a one-to-one basis. Orientation mtg. the fourth Tuesday each month. Minimum age requirement is 24. AAC, 131 Clarendon St. 7:30 p.m. Info: 437-6200x450.

Cambridge ♦ Bisexual Women’s Rap: “2 in 20” episodes 5 and 6. Women’s Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. 354-8807.

29 WEDNESDAY

Boston ♦ “Bent” opens at the Triangle Theater. Martin Sherman’s drama of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals. Performances through 6/22, Wednesday through Saturday evenings. Seats \$15. Tickets through BosTix, Ticketron, or Wednesdays after 7:15 p.m. with credit card: 426-3550.

30 THURSDAY

Boston ♦ The Coalition for L/G Civil Rights. Meets every other Thursday. The Center, rm 202K. 338 Newbury St. 6:30 to 8p.m. Info: David 828-3039.

31 FRIDAY

Boston ♦ Liturgy for All Those Affected by AIDS. Simple reception to follow. Paulist Center, 5 Park St. 7 p.m. 742-4460.

Boston ♦ Friday Night Video Series: “Gilda.” 7 p.m. G/L Comm. Ctr., 338 Newbury. 247- 2927.

Boston ♦ T.G.I.F. Boston Professional Ass’n meets at Club Cafe Moonshine (back bar) for casual cocktails and mixing. Last Friday each month. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. \$3.

Boston ♦ Men of All Colors Together Discussion Group: “Interracial Relationships: Our Fantasies: What Are They? Can We Fulfill Them?” 7:30 p.m. 536 Worcester St., Apt. 1. Info: Tom 536-3392 or Craig 321-4382.

SATURDAYS

Boston ♦ Frontrunners. Meet at Metropolitan Health Club for 2 to 5-mi. run along Charles. Lockers and showers complimentary. 10 a.m. Also: Tues. 12:15 p.m. at MHC; Wed. 6:45 p.m. at Hatch Shell. 282-0013.

Cambridge ♦ Single Mothers’ Support Group. Free drop-in group with child care, alternate Saturdays. Women’s Center. 46 Pleasant St. 11a.m.-12:30 p.m. 354-8807.

Boston ♦ Pink Flamingos. TV/TS of New England. 4 to 6p.m. 338 Newbury St., 2nd flr. 247-2927.

Boston TV ♦ PrideTime — Boston G/L TV, with Cynthia Pape. 7:30 p.m. Boston Neighborhood Network, channels A3 and A8. Also on Cambridge Cable Channel 19, 7 p.m. Tuesdays, and on other systems; check your listings.

Jamaica Plain ♦ Women’s Coffeehouse. Musical entertainment, usually. 8 p.m. Crone’s Harvest, 761 Centre St. \$5 suggested donation. 983-9530.

SUNDAYS

Boston ♦ Different Strokes Swim Team. Coached workouts for swimmers of all abilities. 10:15 a.m. at Boston City Hosp. swimming pool. Ed 767-0449.

Boston ♦ BAGLY Drop-In Center. (BAGLY = Boston Alliance of G/L Youth.) St. John the Evangelist Church, 35 Bowdoin. (800) 42BAGLY.

Boston ♦ Boston Strikers Soccer Club. Weekly novice and club scrimmages. All levels. 3 p.m. Info: Erik 423-0929 or Jeff 876-7612.

Boston ♦ Western Orthodox Church Mass. Arlington St. Church, 351 Boylston St. 227-5794.

Boston ♦ Metropolitan Community Church Worship/Fellowship. 131 Cambridge St. (near Gov’t Ctr.). 7 p.m. Info: Rev. Tanis 437-0420.

Boston ♦ Narcotics Anonymous. UGM. The Center, 338 Newbury St. 8 p.m. 247-2927.

Boston ♦ The Gay Dating Show, WUNR 1600AM. 10:30 p.m.-2:30 a.m. Lesbians and gay men.

MONDAYS

Boston ♦ Positive Directions. Peer-led support group for HIV+ people. Boston Living Center, 140 Clarendon. 12:25 p.m. 262-3456.

Boston ♦ Monday Night Dinners for PWA’s and Friends: about 100 people meeting every Monday at AAC for dinner. No reservations required. 6 p.m.

AAC, 131 Clarendon St. 437-6200.

Dorchester ♦ Alcoholics Anonymous. First Parish Church, Mtg. Hs. Hill. Beginners 6:30, hardhats 8 p.m.

Worcester ♦ AIDS Project Worcester. A support group for family, friends, concerned others dealing with HIV. 305 Shrewsbury St. 7-8:30 p.m. (508)755-3773.

Boston ♦ Boston Bisexual Women’s Network Coordinating Comm. The Center, 338 Newbury St. 247-2927.

Cambridge ♦ Lesbian Rap Group. The Women’s Center. 46 Pleasant St. 8-10 p.m. 354-8807.

Cable TV ♦ “Between Takes.” Often a g/l slant on events. Boston A3 Mondays 9:30 p.m. Cambridge CCTV Thursdays 8:30 p.m. Rhode Island Interconnect A Fridays 8:30 p.m. Other areas: check listings.

TUESDAYS

Providence, RI ♦ ACT UP/Rhode Island. Call for meeting place (401) 461-4191.

Boston ♦ Beantown Women’s Rugby Club. Practice Tuesday and Thursday 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. until June. Info: Sue 776-1649 or Laurie 623-2341.

Cambridge ♦ Bisexual Women’s Rap. The Women’s Center. 46 Pleasant St. 7-8:30. 354-8807.

Medford Radio ♦ “We the People” — with feminist Sheila Parks. WMFO 91.5FM. 7-9a.m. Tufts U. radio.

Worcester ♦ Support Group for HIV+ G/B Men and Their Significant Others. Closed meeting. AIDS Project Worcester. 305 Shrewsbury St. 7-8:30 p.m. (508) 755-3773.

Cambridge ♦ 30+ Lesbian Rap. The Women’s Center. 46 Pleasant St. 7-8:30. 354-8807.

Boston ♦ ACT UP/Boston. The Living Center, YWCA, 140 Clarendon St. 7 p.m. 49-ACTUP.

Boston ♦ L/G Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals. No audition necessary. Mass College of Art, Longwood and Brookline Ave. 7:15 p.m. 266-0628.

WEDNESDAYS

Hyde Park ♦ Women’s Pick-Up Hockey. MDC Hyde Park Rink (near Dedham). 8 to 9 a.m. Info: Janice 326-1600 x350.

Boston ♦ Boston Alliance of G/L Youth (BAGLY). Open to youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. New persons’ meeting 6p.m.; women and men meet separately 6:45 to 7:30; general meeting 7:30 p.m. (800) 42BAGLY.

Cambridge ♦ Lesbian Al-Anon with child care, wheelchair accessible. Women’s Center, 46 Pleasant St. 6:30 to 8 p.m. 354-8807.

Springfield ♦ Names Project Meeting. New chapter with weekly quilting meetings. All welcome. Frontier. 19 Pearl St. 7 to 10 p.m. (413)788-7459

Boston ♦ Positive Directions. Peer-led support group for HIV+ people. Boston Living Center, 140 Clarendon. 7:30 p.m. 262-3456.

Boston ♦ Bisexual Adult Children of Alcoholics. Mass. General Hospital. 7:30 p.m. Info: Marge 259-1559.

Worcester ♦ Support Group for HIV+ who are in Substance Abuse Recovery. Closed meeting. AIDS Project Worcester. 305 Shrewsbury St. 7:30 to 9 p.m. (508) 755-3773.

THURSDAYS

Boston ♦ Boston Area Rape Crisis Center drop-in group for women who have been raped. 492-RAPE.

Somerville ♦ Thursday Night Dinner Pgm. People w/ and concerned w/ AIDS. Family style. Reservations req. 6:15. Coll. Ave. Un. Methodist Church, 14 Chapel St. \$1. 666-4130.

Portsmouth, NH ♦ Out and About. A lesbian social and support group. Info: Keryn (603) 749-5852.

Boston ♦ The Group. Discussion and social hour. The Center, 338 Newbury St. 266-1129.

Boston ♦ L/G Ice Hockey Practices and Intersquad Scrimmages. All levels. 9 p.m. Grrr Bos. rink. Info: John 350-6063, AJ 522-1408.

Cambridge ♦ GAMIT Study Break. (GAMIT = Gays at MIT.) GAMIT lounge, room 50-306, 142 Memorial Dr.

FRIDAYS

Watertown ♦ GLOW: G/L of Watertown. 395-4664.

Boston ♦ GCN Friday Night Stuffing Party. Come stuff the paper, eat pizza, and make new friends. GCN, 62 Berkeley St. 5 p.m. 426-4469.

Boston ♦ Friday Night At The Movies. Boston Living Center. 140 Clarendon St. Free. 7 p.m. 236-1012.

Boston ♦ Positive Directions. Peer-led support group for HIV+ people. Boston Living Center, 140 Clarendon. 7:30 p.m. 262-3456.

Focusing

Continued from centerspread

identification could include everything from S/M women losing their jobs to the basic lack of sensitivity they may encounter.

In spite of such negatives, Stamps said that the S/M community is "about sex; it is a safe sex/pro-sex environment. You would be asked to leave a dungeon if you didn't use condoms, dental dams and gloves. Other parts of the community are living in the problem, the S/M community is living in the solution."

According to Stamps, a big part of the problem for all women is that "we don't really have a language to talk about sex." For S/M women, it is even more difficult to find a forum to speak that language, since that community has been under attack for more than a decade by right wing anti-pornography forces, as well as anti-porn feminists.

"I think it's real hard for women to say, 'This is what I want, this is how I am.' Even to admit that I want to have sex is a big deal," said Stamps. In spite of all this, Stamps said that she feels the community is ready to have sex, safely, and to talk about it.

The many information tables at the conference center turned out to be valuable sources of facts and figures about the state of women's health. At the Women's Community Cancer Project table I learned some alarming things about women and cancer. According to a flyer presented by the group, nearly one in three women in the U.S. will get cancer in her lifetime. Nearly one in four will die of cancer. In 1989, one woman was diagnosed with cancer in the U.S. every minute. One woman died of cancer every 2.2 minutes in the U.S. One in every nine women in the U.S. will get breast cancer in her lifetime. (In 1960, this figure was one in 20.) Twenty-five percent of white women with breast cancer in the U.S. will not live more than five years; 40 percent of Black women with breast cancer in the U.S. will not live more than five years.

The basic methods of treatment for breast cancer—surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy—are the same as those that were used in 1950. Mammography is *not* a cure for breast cancer.

Keeping in mind that this conference was



Displaying strap-on dental dams

about women and AIDS (and, once again, not to take away from the struggles of those communities that have been most affected by the epidemic), it was important that this group was at the conference to call attention to the fact that women and cancer is an overlooked issue in the U.S.

According to an article by Fern Schumer Chapman in *USA Today*, "The U.S. government spent roughly 10 times as much on AIDS research last year—\$1.1 billion—as it spent on breast cancer research, even though breast cancer has claimed roughly six times as many lives in the last 10 years."

The disproportionate amount of money allocated to women and breast cancer has not caused women to begrudge AIDS funding so much as provided inspiration to women cancer activists. It's clear that the AIDS epidemic deserves money from the government—and lots of it—but so does a disease like breast cancer. It's not surprising, then, that ACT UP—the first organization to react politically to a disease by lying down in

the street—has come to inspire many women working on cancer issues. These activists are now using AIDS actions as models.

According to Chapman, "Women have begun to pressure lawmakers, hold demonstrations and develop underground information networks on experimental treatments and clinical trials, just as AIDS activists have done."

It became clear at the conference that the issues of women and cancer and women and AIDS go hand in hand. One may take more lives at a given moment, but both are part of one big health issue. Neither are getting the attention, concern or funding they deserve.

Barrier carriers

On Saturday morning I attended "What Goes Down is Up to You: Make Your Own Safer, Erotic Barrier Carriers for Oral Sex." This discussion was informally structured and facilitated by Women, Inc. About 20 people split up into groups of three and four and were given different safer sex devices

and sex enhancers, such as whipped cream and an avocado or panties with the crotch removed and plastic food wrap inserted.

The groups were asked to come up with ideas about how they would use the various items. After sharing with the larger group this information—which didn't get too explicit—people returned to the smaller discussion groups. The atmosphere was relaxed and each group seemed to be engaged in openly and enthusiastically sharing information. Topics like microwavable versus non-microwavable food wraps, and the merits of genuine dental dams were discussed.

What struck me most about this part of the workshop was that, in its own small way, it delivered on the promise of the conference in general. It seemed as if we spent a lot of time talking about how much information was available, but that, as women, we often had great difficulties sharing that information with each other. And here we were, actually doing it.

The sum of its parts

Ultimately, the success of the individual portions of the Women and AIDS Conference added up to the success of the conference as a whole. According to Cynthia Rothschild, conference co-coordinator from the FCHC, women and AIDS "as a health issue is overlooked." But it seems as if this is starting to change, this conference being evidence of that.

Planning for the conference began three years ago in 1988. "It's been a hard process, pulling it off," said Rothschild, but "people have been very supportive." She added, "It's been a microcosm of positive things. Working with some of the people that I've been working with who have been so charged and so incredibly dedicated, demonstrates the level of conviction of the people working in this field."

Perhaps the success of the conference can be best registered by the number of people who turned out to share information. According to Rothschild, "There are plenty of people looking for an outlet for women and HIV—this conference has provided an outlet. People came out of the woodwork for this thing; it was wonderful." □

CHRIS JANSKY

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